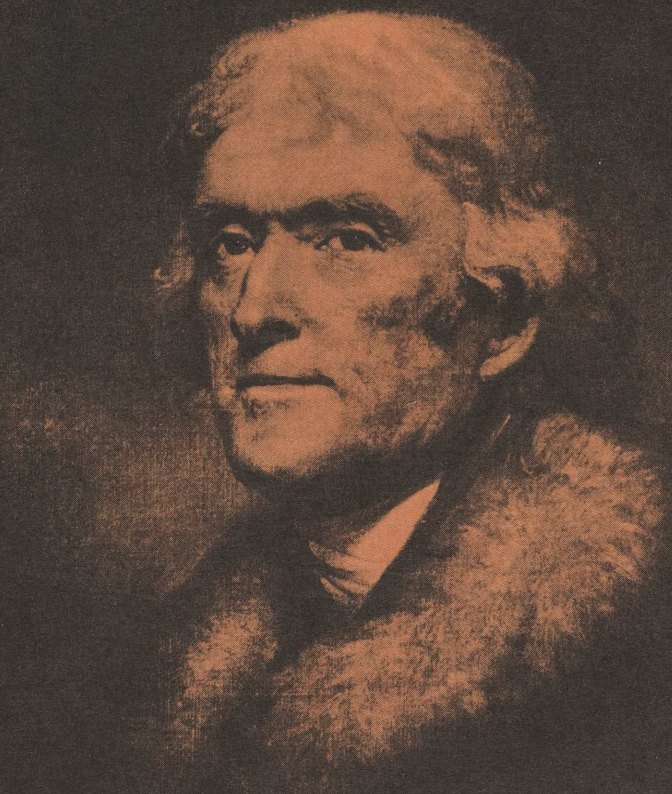


THOMAS JEFFERSON



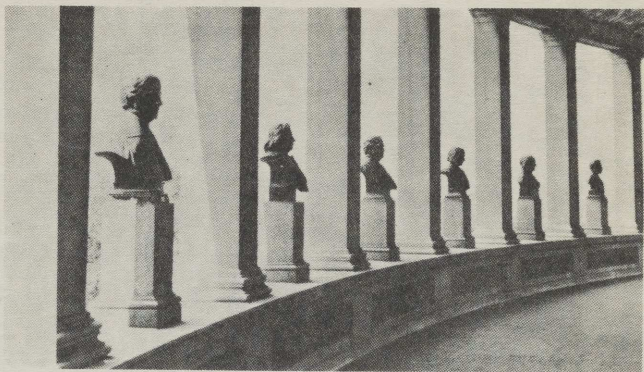
Hall of Fame

THOMAS JEFFERSON

On the modest stone that marked the grave of Thomas Jefferson, the third president of the United States asked to be engraved the three things for which he wanted to be remembered. It is characteristic of the scale of values by which he lived that he did not choose to be remembered as the leader of a rising young nation, for his many acts of statesmanship both in America and abroad, or for the many honors that had come to him from governments, institutions and learned societies all over the world. Instead he asked that future generations know him as the author of the Declaration of Independence, as the author of the bill to establish religious freedom in Virginia, and as the founder of the University of Virginia.

To this man, whose life was a model of the versatility of the human mind and spirit, these three facets represented the crowning achievements of his life, because they represented the highest principles of his life. To him, probably more than to any other single man, we owe the formulation of the concepts of political freedom by which we live today. When the Constitution was adopted, he was one of those who insisted on the need for a Bill of Rights that would spell out in unmistakable terms the right of Americans to speak, read, meet, work and worship as individual need and individual conscience dictate, without interference by a tyrannical government. And along with this right, throughout his entire public life, he championed the opportunity for everyone to be educated for the highest purpose to which an individual's natural abilities could be led. Wellborn himself, living the life of a gentleman, a landowner and a slaveholder, with the inbred

"Every American is a Shareholder in the Hall of Fame"



THE HALL OF FAME FOR GREAT AMERICANS

In silent majesty, high above the historic Hudson and Harlem Rivers on the campus of New York University, stands The Hall of Fame for Great Americans. Administered by the University, it is the proud possession of all the people. Here, in the massive open-air colonnade are immortalized in bronze those men and women who "by wealth of thought or else by mighty deed . . . served mankind in noble character, in world-wide good [and who will] live forever more."

No name may be inscribed in the Hall of Fame except of one whose home was in the United States and who has been deceased at least twenty-five years. Nominations are made by the American people; elections by the majority vote of an electoral body of approximately one hundred distinguished Americans from all the states in the Union and who represent a great variety of interests. Since the inception of the Hall of Fame, hundreds of personages have been nominated for inclusion therein. Less than one hundred have been elected. Thus each American so honored stands literally as the representative of several million of his fellow countrymen.

Here is pure greatness — a legacy to all Americans who would do honor to noble thought and dedicated action.

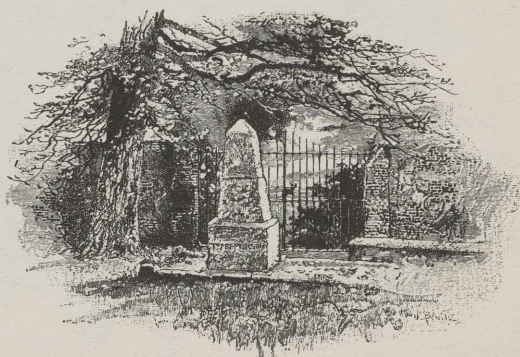
The full-length portrait figure of Jefferson stands in the memorial in Washington beside the words that he made famous

tendencies of an aristocrat, he nevertheless understood the needs and desires of the people and he devoted his life to causes that would leave them more secure, freer than before from the burdens of poverty, restriction and persecution.

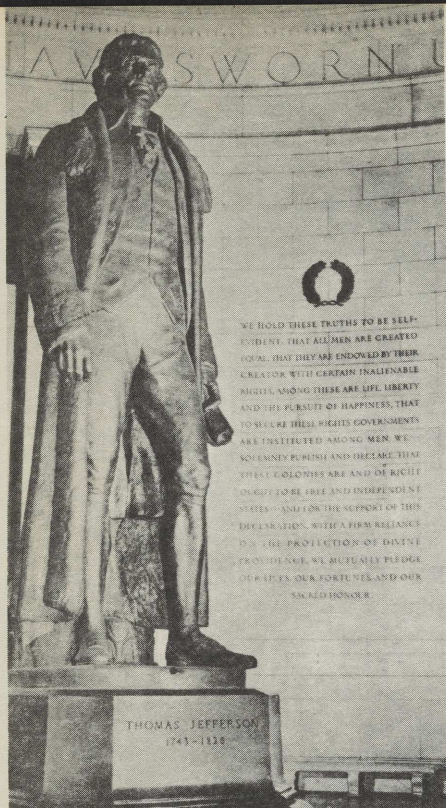
Thomas Jefferson was born on April 13, 1743, in what is now Albemarle County, Virginia. He loved the red hills of his home county, and no matter how far away his career took him, he returned always to Monticello, the home he built here, and at Monticello he died in his eighty-fourth year, the revered elder-statesman, honored at home and in Europe not only as a statesman and diplomat, but as an author, inventor, architect and scientist as well.

His father was of an old family, originally from Wales, but already in the third generation of Virginians when Thomas was born. His mother was Jane Randolph, a name that connoted the highest aristocracy of Virginia's first families. And from this unlikely background sprung the man who was to become the symbol of the liberal Revolution in America and in the world.

His early life was typical of the great and wealthy families of Virginia of that period. He studied Latin, Greek and French with the Reverend William Douglas, and the Classics



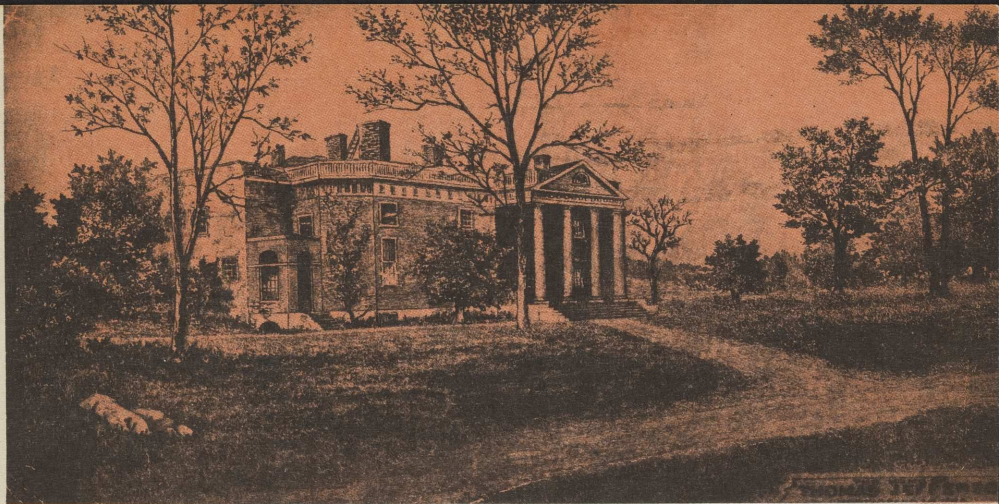
The tomb of Thomas Jefferson



Jefferson. A nineteenth-century portrait in wood.

with the Reverend James Maury. When he was seventeen he entered the College of William and Mary, and in his two years study he acquired a taste for mathematics, science, philosophy and law, and when he was graduated at nineteen, he had all the requisites of an aristocratic young bachelor. As the elder son, he had inherited his father's lands, 2750 acres, and he could have lived his life in the luxury and safe obscurity of his beloved county estate.

He is described as a young man as tall, loose-jointed, freckled and sandy haired, not handsome but never lacking the companionship of other young men and women. He was a horseman, with some skill on the violin, and was a typical



Monticello as it appeared a half-century after Jefferson's death

it went Jefferson's carefully chosen library. He selected a new site on a hilltop, and began the building of "Monticello," the house in which he lived the rest of his life.

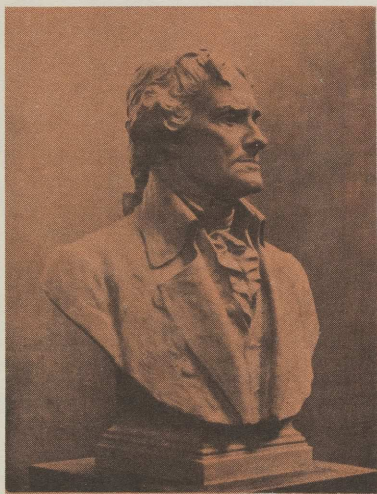
It was at this time that he fell in love with Martha Wayles Skelton, a beautiful young widow of twenty-three. On New Year's day, 1772, they were married, and Jefferson took his young bride to live in the one wing of Monticello that had been finished by then. Mrs. Jefferson lived only ten years after her second marriage, and her husband loved her with a deep devotion. When she died, Jefferson was still a young man in his late thirties, and although he survived his beloved wife by more than four decades, he found no one else to take her place in his life. Of the six children born to the couple, only two daughters reached maturity, and only one, Martha, survived him.

Shortly after his admission to the bar, he began his long career in public service. At the age of twenty-six, in 1769, he was elected to the Virginia House of Burgesses, where he served until the eve of the Revolution, when he moved into the broader sphere of national affairs. In the House he was a

fun loving boy of wealth and social position. An unhappy love affair drove his thoughts inward, and the more serious side of his nature asserted itself. He studied law under George Wythe, delving deep into legal history, and out of his study of the history of law came the knowledge that later went into the preparation of the documents that form some of the great cornerstones of American democracy.

When he was twenty-four, he was admitted to the bar. Never a good public speaker, he did not like his appearances in court. But he was a successful lawyer, and he practiced in his home county until the coming of the Revolution brought him into the vortex of greater issues, and stamped the impress of destiny upon him.

His work and his estate occupied him fully, and for nearly a decade after his unhappy love affair, he had no thought for any other woman. Since he was nine years old he had lived at "Shadwell," the house that his father had built, but when he was twenty-seven, the house burned down, and along with



Monticello

Bust of Jefferson by Robert Aitken in the Hall of Fame

friend of Patrick Henry, the brilliant young speaker whose oration inflamed the rebellious colonials and is still well remembered as a masterpiece. As a legislator, he was consistent in his support of the rights of the colonies against the Mother country, and it was his resolution in support of the Boston rebels that led to the dissolution of the House.

The Virginia Convention, to which he had been elected a delegate, chose him as one of the colony's representatives in the Continental Congress, and it is notable that in the first year, while many delegates still hoped for conciliation with England, Jefferson's views were considered too extreme, and the documents that came from his pen were thought to be too strongly anti-British. But by late Spring of 1776, there could no longer be any doubt of the course that the Congress must take. Jefferson, along with John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Robert R. Livingston and Roger Sherman, was elected to draft a "declaration of independence."

Now Thomas Jefferson came into his own. He had already written a great document, *A Summary View of the Rights of British America*, setting forth the view that England had no parliamentary authority over the colonies. In the Declaration he drew upon his profound study of the revolutionary philosophies of the Europeans and the political doctrines of John Locke, who had so deeply influenced eighteenth century thinking. But the document that came from his pen, and that was adopted with only minor changes by the Congress, was essentially the product of his own thinking, and it has come down through two centuries as an inspiration to persecuted and oppressed peoples in every part of the world.

"We hold these truths to be self-evident," he wrote, "that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness.—That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving

their just powers from the consent of the governed.—That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it.” These words have become indelibly inscribed upon the political consciousness of the world, and have become a rallying cry of free men in every country where freedom has not been stifled.

After the adoption of the Declaration, Jefferson returned to Virginia to be near his family and to serve his own colony the better. For three years he served in the newly formed House of Delegates. As a leader in the legislature he introduced much progressive legislation, much of it successful, either then or later. He secured revision of land-holding and inheritance laws, primarily the barbaric rule of primogeniture, by which landed estates passed from father to eldest son. He introduced a bill for the guarantee of religious freedom, and to the end of his life he regarded this as one of the major achievements of his life. His bills for the reform of education, although not immediately successful, were later made the basis of a complete revision of public education in Virginia.

In 1779, he was elected Governor to succeed Patrick Henry, but his career as an administrator was not eminently successful. He “resigned” the governorship in 1781, when the British were menacing the entire state, and later the legislature launched an investigation of his tenure as Governor. He was vindicated, and the legislature tendered a vote of thanks, but it was long before the stigma of the charges against him were fully removed.

Jefferson was still to serve a long apprenticeship in public service that would lead him to the Presidency, but in 1781 this was still far ahead of him, and he was convinced that his public life was over. He retired to his home, his books and his family, and in his retirement wrote the first draft of

The first cabinet: Knox, Jefferson, Randolph, Hamilton, Washington

what was later to become one of his most important publications, *Notes on the State of Virginia*.

But his retirement lasted only a year. After the death of his wife, he again sought escape from his grief in public life. After a brief service in Congress, he was appointed an envoy to France, and here he was a witness to the stirring events that led finally to the outbreak of the French Revolution. In Europe he had also an opportunity to study at first hand the emerging philosophy of a new political thought, scientific advances, architecture, music, art—all of the varied endeavors in which he had a great personal interest.

When he returned to America in 1789, it was with the intention of returning to France as soon as he had settled his private affairs. But he had no sooner landed than he was immediately involved in national affairs. The Constitution had been ratified, and the thirteen states, bound together since the end of the Revolution in a loose Confederacy, had

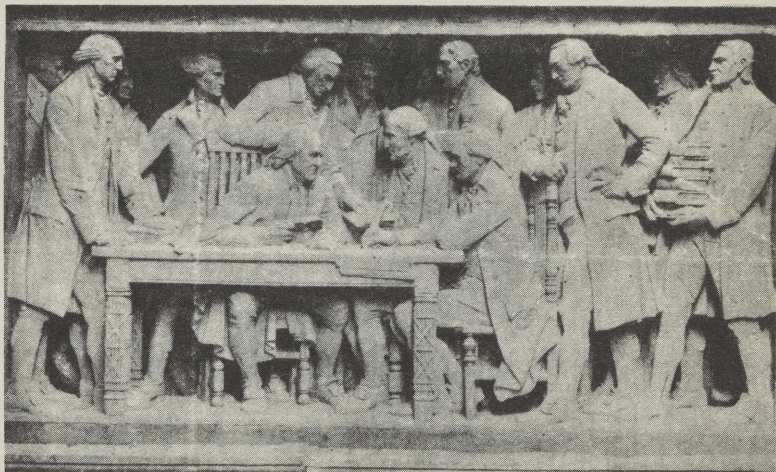


"Mad Tom in a rage"—a vitriolic cartoon published as Jefferson began his administration

become a nation. George Washington, upon assuming the Presidency, was forming his first cabinet, and his choice immediately fell upon Jefferson for the highest appointment, as Secretary of State. Casting aside his personal preferences, Jefferson agreed, and the first administration came into being.

Jefferson's relations with his colleagues in the cabinet were cordial—except for Alexander Hamilton, with whom he found himself constantly in disagreement. Hamilton's views were autocratic, favoring a strong central government. Jefferson favored a large measure of autonomy for the states, and he was deeply concerned about the rights of individuals. The two men found themselves bitter political foes, and from these basic disagreements came the foundations for America's first political parties: the Federalists under Hamilton (ancestor of our present Republican party) and the Anti-Federalists or Republicans under Jefferson, who eventually became the Democratic party of today.

When Washington, after two terms, relinquished the Presidency, Jefferson appeared to be a logical successor. He was



Drafting the Constitution, bas-relief by Lee Lowrie



indifferent, and was not unhappy that the choice fell upon John Adams, with Jefferson elected to the Vice-Presidency. The salary of the office was welcome, as he had never succeeded in freeing himself from the heavy indebtedness of his estates, and as Vice-President he could spend much of his time in study and supervising the constant building and change at Monticello. But he was unhappy with the Federalist administration of Adams, and when he was nominated for the Presidency again in 1800, he entered the contest enthusiastically, to become America's third President and the first of his party. He was the first also to be inaugurated in Washington, a city he himself had helped to plan.

His administration was a popular one. The Virginia aristocrat was first and foremost a champion of the people. He had strongly urged the need for a Bill of Rights in the Constitution, to protect the individual liberties that the colonists had so dearly earned. Under his administration the Capital in the Federal District of Columbia became a growing reality. The United States acquired the great Louisiana Territory, spreading the frontiers of the Union to the Mississippi, and

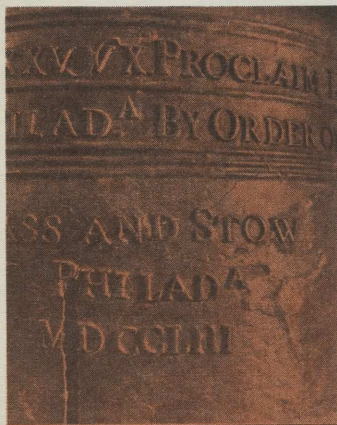
Captains Lewis and Clark undertook the expedition that opened the way for the young nation to flex its bulging muscles, an expedition that Jefferson himself planned and organized. In the many trials that faced young America, Jefferson proved himself a most able administrator, dealing wisely with the Barbary Pirates, the treason of his Vice-President Aaron Burr, the Napoleonic wars that threatened to extend their long grip across the ocean. Subjected to the most vitriolic attack by his enemies, he conducted himself and his office with wisdom and tolerance, and when he left Washington in 1809 for his final retirement, the federation of colonies had taken a long, long step toward nationhood.

Jefferson was sixty-six years old when he retired at last to the peace and security of Monticello. Now he could indeed devote himself to his study, his writing, his scientific curiosity, his architectural innovations. But he was not yet at the end of his public career. His hopes for the reform of education in Virginia seemed on the way to fulfillment, and he again interested himself in a State University. His efforts were successful, and he lived to see the hope a reality. The legislature chartered the institution, and under Jefferson's guidance and architectural planning proceeded. He himself laid out the plan for the buildings and grounds, and even suggested and developed the courses of study. Before his death the university had been built and was in full operation.

In few Americans has the Baconian ideal of the "full man" been realized as completely as in Thomas Jefferson. He indeed took all knowledge to be his province. Although he chose law as his profession and steeped himself in legal history and jurisprudence, he was renowned as a philosopher, a scientist and inventor, a linguist and author equally at home in several languages, an architect who exercised a profound influence on the classical revival in America, a statesman rather than a politician, a prophet of liberalism who heralded

a hundred years before the dream became reality the "century of the common man."

His death was incredibly dramatic, coming fifty years almost to the hour after the proclamation of the Declaration of Independence. A revered elder statesman and patriarch surrounded by his grandchildren, he died at noon, in 1826, on the Fourth of July, a date that he has forever inscribed in the long annals of human progress.



The famous crack in the Liberty Bell



Portrait figure of Jefferson on the campus of the University of Virginia

Jefferson in 1786. The earliest known portrait by Mather Brown



"I have sword upon the altar of God, eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man."

—*Letter to Dr. Benjamin Rush*
[September 23, 1800]

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